

Aging Opportunities News

Monthly e-newsletter

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EPA Supports Research on Environment and Aging

As part of its new Aging Initiative, the Environmental Protection Agency is developing a National Agenda on the Environment and the Aging to address the health effects of environmental hazards to older Americans. It will identify environmental health risks to seniors and the impact of the rapidly aging population on the environment. EPA will seek model programs that provide opportunities for older persons to volunteer in their communities to reduce environmental hazards and protect the environment. Public comments on the agenda are due May 16.

The Aging Initiative will identify indoor (cleaning products, pesticides) and outdoor (ozone) environmental hazards and recommend ways to prevent or reduce seniors' exposures. Other environmental threats to seniors include E. coli and microorganisms in water, volatile organic compounds, lead and mercury. EPA's partners in the development of the agenda include:

- Tampa University of South Florida;
- University of California Los Angeles Graduate School of Public Health and UCLA Center on Aging;
- University of Iowa College of Public Health and Center on Aging;
- University of Maryland Baltimore School of Medicine and Center for Research on Aging;
- University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health; and
- University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio.

EPA has scheduled six public listening sessions (California, Florida, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Texas) beginning in early April. (Details are in the March 4 *Federal Register*, p. 10238.)

EPA has a new Web site on these issues: www.epa.gov/aging. It highlights ongoing EPA research on environmental health issues affecting older persons and provides links to federal, state and local partners and agencies.

Contact: Kathy Sykes, EPA Aging Initiative Coordinator, (202) 564-2188, aging.info@epa.gov.

Other Aging & Environment News

EPA has an \$85,000 cooperative agreement with the National Indian Council on Aging Inc. to assess environmental health issues of American Indians and Alaskan Natives. These American Indian elders experience 44 percent more asthma attacks than the general aging population. Contact: Luke Hester, (202) 564-7818, hester.luke@epa.gov.

EPA has a memorandum of understanding with the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement (EASI), Philadelphia, to promote and encourage senior involvement to protect and clean up the environment. It also awarded a \$95,000 environmental health grant to EASI for the senior mentors to children's environmental health project, which will promote the environmental health of children in local communities through collaborations between the Senior Environmental Corps and local youth groups. Contact: Bonnie Smith, (215) 814-5543.

Victor Fuchs, professor emeritus at Stanford University, recently reported that reducing older persons' exposures to environment pollutants could improve health and lower Medicare costs (November/December issue of *Health Affairs*).

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